

About General Semantics

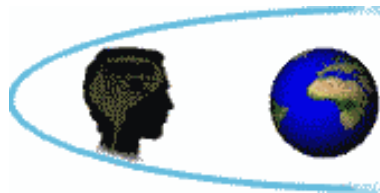


General Semantics can be considered an *inter-disciplinary* discipline for evaluating and adjusting to what happens in your life. You might say that general semantics makes it easier for you to live with yourself ... to live with others ... and for others to live with you.

General Semantics helps you differentiate, and integrate, what we might think of as four different 'worlds' ...

- the world '**out there**', beyond your skin, that's always changing, in perpetual process
- the world '**in here**', inside your skin, your nervous system and senses, through which you (only partially) experience the world 'out there'
- the world that's **not words**, the **non-verbal** world that you see, hear, taste, smell and touch
- the world of **words**, your **verbal** world of names, symbols, labels, opinions, assumptions, categories, values, beliefs, etc.

In our verbal world of *words*, we integrate what we 'know' **about** the world '*out there*', *the world 'in here*' and the world that's *not words*.



Courtesy Institute of General Semantics

General semantics, formulated by Alfred Korzybski in his 1933 book, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems*, is based on underlying premises, some (but not all) of which include:

- We live in a continually-changing, *process-oriented* world, much of which we have no means of directly observing or experiencing.
- What we *do* experience is therefore *partial* and *incomplete*; we **abstract** only a small portion of what's there - and there is *always* more.
- Different people abstract differently from their own individual experiences, based on their backgrounds, capabilities, interests, biases, etc.
- As we become more *conscious* of this abstracting process, we learn how to become more tolerant and accepting of our own - and others - limitations and potentialities.
- We recognize the distinctions between the **non-verbal world** in which we sense and experience, and our **verbal world** in which we use *symbols and language* to talk about what we sense and experience.
- The methods of a *scientific approach* provide us with a basis for evaluating and modifying our attitudes, behaviors and beliefs.

If you deliberately practice **general semantics** ... the potential consequences include:

- More effective, discriminating communications with others, and with yourself
- More appropriate, and desirable, reactions, responses and adjustments to the inevitable "*accidents waiting to happen*" in your four 'worlds'
- A more tolerant, inquisitive, open-minded, "matter-of-fact" outlook that is less prone to prejudice, stereotyping, and dogmatic generalizations
- A greater degree of moment-to-moment awareness of your own, and others', different perspectives.

How we feel about ourselves, the joy we get from living, ultimately depend directly on how the mind filters and interprets everyday experiences.

Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi

[GS Sampler Home](#)

[CD Start Page](#)

[ThisIsNotThat.com](#)

[Institute of General Semantics](#)

ThisIsNotThat.com | Steve Stockdale © 1999-2005

Visit the [Institute of General Semantics](#)